

1 **CLAIMS**

2 1. A method comprising:
3 receiving a request to tune a first channel;
4 assigning a first tuner to tune the first channel;
5 receiving a request to tune a second channel;
6 assigning the first tuner to tune the second channel if the program tuned by
7 the first tuner is not being recorded; and
8 assigning a second tuner to tune the second channel if the program tuned by
9 the first tuner is being recorded.

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11 2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein assigning a second tuner to
12 tune the second channel includes determining whether a second tuner is available
13 for tuning.

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15 3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the method is performed by a
16 set top box.

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18 4. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising assigning a third
19 tuner to tune the first channel if the first tuner is unable to tune the first channel.

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21 5. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising assigning a third
22 tuner to tune the second channel if the second tuner is unable to tune the second
23 channel.
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1 6. A method comprising:
2 receiving a request to tune a particular channel;
3 determining whether a second tuner is available for tuning;
4 assigning a first tuner to tune the particular channel if the program currently
5 tuned by the first tuner is not being recorded; and
6 assigning the second tuner to tune the second channel if the second tuner is
7 available for tuning and the program currently tuned by the first tuner is being
8 recorded.

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10 7. A method as recited in claim 6, further comprising assigning the first
11 tuner to tune the particular channel if the second tuner is not available for tuning.

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13 8. A method as recited in claim 6, further comprising assigning a third
14 tuner to tune the particular channel if the first tuner and the second tuner are not
15 available to tune the particular channel.

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17 9. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein determining whether a
18 second tuner is available for tuning includes a first tuner querying the second tuner.

1 **10.** A method comprising:
2 receiving a request to record a program on a first channel;
3 assigning a first tuner to tune the first channel;
4 receiving a request to tune a second channel;
5 determining whether the second channel is already being tuned;
6 determining whether a second tuner is available for tuning;
7 assigning the first tuner to tune the second channel if the second channel is
8 not already being tuned and the second tuner is not available for tuning; and
9 assigning the second tuner to tune the second channel if the second channel
10 is not already being tuned and the second tuner is available for tuning.

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12 **11.** A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising switching to the
13 tuner assigned to the second channel if the second channel is already being tuned.

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15 **12.** A method as recited in claim 10, further comprising assigning a
16 third tuner to tune the first channel if the first tuner is not available to tune the first
17 channel.

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19 **13.** A method as recited in claim 10, wherein determining whether a
20 second tuner is available for tuning includes querying the second tuner to
21 determine the status of the second tuner.

1 **14.** A method comprising:
2 receiving a request to record a program on a first channel;
3 assigning a first tuner to tune the first channel;
4 receiving a request to tune a second channel;
5 assigning a second tuner to tune the second channel if the second tuner is
6 available for tuning;
7 receiving a request to tune the first channel;
8 switching to the first tuner; and
9 displaying an indicator that the user is now watching a recorded program.
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11 **15.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the recorded program data
12 from the first channel is associated with the first tuner.
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14 **16.** A method as recited in claim 14, further comprising changing the
15 status of the second tuner to an available state.
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17 **17.** A method as recited in claim 14, further comprising assigning the
18 second tuner to tune the first channel if the first tuner is not available to tune the
19 first channel.
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21 **18.** A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the recorded program data
22 associated with the first tuner is modified to be associated with the second tuner if
23 the first tuner is not available to tune the first channel.
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1 **19.** A method as recited in claim 17, wherein a new set of recorded
2 program data is generated and associated with the second tuner.

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4 **20.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein the method is performed
5 by a set top box.

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7 **21.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein switching to the first tuner
8 includes displaying the program content currently being tuned by the first tuner.

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10 **22.** A method as recited in claim 14, wherein switching to the first tuner
11 includes displaying previously recorded program content if the first tuner has been
12 recording the tuned content.

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14 **23.** An apparatus comprising:
15 a first tuner configured to tune one of a plurality of channels;
16 a second tuner configured to tune one of a plurality of channels;
17 a disk drive coupled to the first tuner and the second tuner, the disk drive
18 configured to store program data tuned by the first tuner or the second tuner; and
19 a tuner controller coupled to the first tuner and the second tuner, the tuner
20 controller configured to determine one of the plurality of channels for each tuner to
21 tune, the tuner controller further configured to prevent the second tuner from
22 tuning the same channel as the first tuner.

1 **24.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, further comprising a first
2 decoder coupled to the first tuner and the disk drive, the first decoder configured to
3 decode encoded program content tuned by the first tuner.
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5 **25.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, further comprising a second
6 decoder coupled to the second tuner and the disk drive, the second decoder
7 configured to decode encoded program content tuned by the second tuner.
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9 **26.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, further comprising a decoder
10 coupled to the first tuner, the second tuner, and the disk drive, the decoder
11 configured to decode encoded program content tuned by the first tuner or the
12 second tuner.
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14 **27.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the tuner controller is
15 further configured to change the first tuner to a new channel in response to a
16 request to change channels if the second tuner is not available for tuning.
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18 **28.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the tuner controller is
19 further configured to assign the second tuner to tune a new channel in response to
20 a request to change channels if the second tuner is available for tuning.
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1 **29.** An apparatus as recited in claim 23, wherein the tuner controller is
2 further configure to assign the second tuner to tune a new channel in response to a
3 request to change channels if the program tuned by the first tuner is being
4 recorded.

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6 **30.** One or more computer-readable media having stored thereon a
7 computer program that, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one
8 or more processors to:

9 receive a request to tune a first channel;
10 assign a first tuner to tune the first channel;
11 receive a request to tune a second channel;
12 determine whether a second tuner is available for tuning;
13 assign the first tuner to tune the second channel if the second tuner is not
14 available for tuning; and
15 assign the second tuner to tune the second channel if the second tuner is
16 available for tuning.

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18 **31.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 30,
19 wherein the second tuner is queried for a status of the second tuner to determine
20 whether the second tuner is available for tuning.
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1 **32.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 30, further
2 causing the one or more processors to assign a third tuner to tune the second
3 channel if the first tuner and the second tuner are not available to tune the second
4 channel.

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6 **33.** One or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 30, further
7 causing the one or more processors to display an indicator if the second channel is
8 being recorded.